

BOOKS

All you wanted to know about IT, but were too afraid to ask

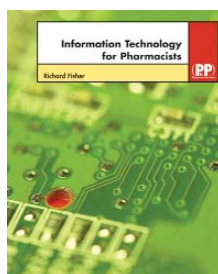
Information technology for pharmacists, by Richard Fisher. Pp viii+243. Price £26.95. London: Pharmaceutical Press; 2006. ISBN 0 85369 577 6

The subtitle of this book could be “all you wanted to know about IT, but were too afraid to ask”. It is a comprehensive overview of information technology, from the basics of “what is a PC?” to the huge “National programme for information technology” (NPfIT). While the book can be read and understood by anyone, it is targeted at a pharmacy audience and uses real-world examples, such as labelling, stock control and electronic transcription of prescriptions, to illustrate the topic under discussion.

The book is pitched at the right level, giving enough information to explain. Throughout the book website references are included in case the reader wishes to obtain further information.

As with all books on IT they are swiftly rendered out of date by advances in technology and this one will be no different. One niggle I have with the book is that Connecting for Health is referred to as the new name for the NPfIT. However, Connecting for Health is really the agency responsible for delivering the NPfIT.

At 186 pages, it is not a long read and this is helped by the 37-page glossary which cov-



ers all those weird and wonderful terms so loved by “techies”. For those who know nothing it will bring them up to date; for others it might be a bit expensive. It will not help you to fix your own PC but at least you will understand what the repairman is saying.

Richard Eyles

Practical guide to quality management in clinical trial research

'A practical guide to quality management in clinical trial research', by Graham Ogg. Pp 232. Price £97. London: CRC Press; 2005. ISBN 0849397227

This book explains how to implement GxP-compliant quality systems in clinical research. (GxP is a collective term for quality guidelines.) The author, drawing from his extensive knowledge, provides a good selection of examples and ideas of how to do this, not only to meet regulatory requirements but to incorporate business quality improvements. It also provides practical advice on how to prepare, update and maintain standard operating procedures, as well as highlighting key activities that should be monitored to help ensure compliance with the various regulations.

This book is aimed at anyone involved in clinical research quality systems, such as those who work in quality assurance, audit and clinical research. It is particularly aimed at clinicians involved in running clinical trials in a non-commercial environment and those providing laboratory services in university departments and hospitals. This book may also be relevant to clinical research associates and pharmaceutical industry personnel.

As the title suggests, the author has tried to make this a practical guide to setting up a management process for quality assurance. A number of helpful forms, checklists and approaches are provided to facilitate this. It is written in a friendly style which helps to liven up what can be a rather dry subject.

Some of the book's strengths include the practical nature of the forms, checklists and methods, and the usefulness of the information resources and acronyms section. Key GxP areas are covered, particularly the good laboratory practice and good manufacturing practice aspects of quality assurance for clinical trials.

Some areas of this topic are not covered in much detail in the book, or at all, although the author does explain that he cannot cover everything. It would have needed to be a much longer book to do this so this is just a minor point. The book also focuses a great deal on the laboratory and only mentions UK-specific legislation; if it is aimed specifically at a UK market that is fine. The book is not aimed so much at the pharmaceutical industry so the title could be misleading and it is less focused on good clinical practice than one might have expected from the title of the book. Also, on Figure 6.2, the type size is

rather small to be able to read easily.

Given the cost of advice on quality assurance I would say that the book is good value for money.

Laura Brown

Valuable reference source on the emerging specialty of sports and exercise medicine

'Sport and exercise medicine for pharmacists', edited by Steven B. Kayne. Pp xxxi+354. Price £29.95. London: Pharmaceutical Press; 2006. ISBN 0 85369 600 4

This book is both an interesting read and a valuable reference source. It is written by pharmacists and health care professionals who have specialist knowledge and expertise in sports and exercise medicine.

The book is clearly laid out in four main sections and each chapter signposts further reading and useful addresses, with supporting diagrams and photographs. A wide diversity of topics is covered, ranging from the physiology of exercise, the treatment and prevention of sports-related injuries through to the application of sports pharmacy in practice and the role of the pharmacist in sport and exercise care.

A glimpse behind the scenes of international sporting events is also provided, highlighting the history and misuse of drugs in sport, dope testing and international anti-doping systems in place. Pharmacists are expanding their role in health promotion and it is likely that they will be called upon to provide drug advice (both in and out of competition) for athletes in the run up to the 2012 Olympic Games. This emphasises the need to develop a better understanding of sports and exercise medicine and awareness of the resources currently available from government and sporting bodies.

This book is an investment worth making in the emerging specialty of sport and exercise medicine.

Margaret Hagan

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